

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
CINCPAC HONOLULU

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 9166

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR ETRD EWWT LA TH
SUBJECT: LAO DEPUTY PM AND FONMIN PHOUN VISIT TO THAILAND

1. I DISCUSSED THE MARCH 22-25 VISIT OF THE LAO DELEGATION
LED BY PHOUN SIPRASEUTH WITH MFA UNDER SECRETARY ARUN
PHANUPHONG TODAY. ARUN SAID THE FOLLOWING TOPICS WERE
COVERED.

A. VIETNAMESE-KHMER RELATIONS. THE LAO WERE VERY
ANXIOUS TO GET THE THAI PUBLICLY COMMITTED TO THE
RESOLUTION OF THE VIETNAMESE/KHMER CONFLICT THROUGH
NEGOTIATIONS. ARUN SAID THAT THEIR FORMULATION SEEMED
IDENTICAL TO THE VIETNAMESE POSITION. WHILE THAILAND
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IS FOR THE NEGOTIATED RESOLUTION OF ANY CONFLICT,
HE WOULD NOT AGREE TO THE SPECIFIC MENTIONING OF
CAMBODIA OR VIETNAM IN THE COMMUNIQUE.

B. BORDER CROSSING POINTS. THE LAO WISHED
TO HAVE MORE BORDER CROSSING POINTS OPENED. THE
THAI ACCEPTED SAVANNAKHET-MUKDAHAN, BUT REFUSED

TO OPEN THE LAND FRONTIER OPPOSITE PAKSE OR A CROSSING IN THE TRI-BORDER AREA.

C. TRANSIT OF GOODS. THE LAO COMPLAINED OF THE HIGH COST OF TRANSPORTING FOODS ACROSS THAILAND. (COMMENT: THIS IS A TRADITIONAL COMPLAINT WHICH LONG ANTEDATES THE COMMUNIST REGIME.) THE THAI AGREED TO STUDY THE MATTER AND TO SEEK AGREEMENT WITH THE LAO ON QTE EQUITABLE UNQTE RATES. ALTHOUGH THE NOTION IS FAR-FETCHED, THE LAO WERE ASKED TO COME UP WITH COSTS FOR TRANSPORTATION FROM DANANG TO THE THAI BORDER AS A FORMULA FOR EQUITABILITY.

D. TRADE. THE LAO AGREED TO LANGUAGE WITH REGARD TO INCREASED TRADE, BUT WERE REALLY NOT INTERESTED IN THIS TOPIC.

E. REFUGEES. THE THAI MADE CLEAR THAT THEY WERE IN NO WAY SEEKING TO ENTICE LAO INTO THAILAND. INDEED, THEY WOULD BE DELIGHTED TO ASSIST IN VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION. ACCORDING TO ARUN, THE LAO WERE EMBARRASSED BY THIS TOPIC AND WERE NOT PREPARED TO DISCUSS IT.

F. RIVER PATROLS. THE LAO ASKED THAT THE THAI DISCONTINUE THEIR RIVER PATROLS. THE THAI SAID THAT THEY WOULD BE CONFIDENTIAL

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GLAD TO CONSIDER THIS AT A LATER DATE, BUT FOR THE MOMENT IT WAS TO THE INTEREST OF BOTH SIDES TO HAVE THE PATROLS CONTINUE.

G. INCIDENTS. BOTH SIDES AGREED THAT RESTRAINT SHOULD BE EXERCISED IN PUBLICIZING INCIDENTS AND THAT THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES SHOULD CONSULT OVER BORDER PROBLEMS. THE LAO AGREED BUT NOTED THAT THEIR LOCAL OFFICIALS WOULD HAVE TO GET INSTRUCTIONS FROM VIENTIANE.

2. COMMENT. ARUN SAID THE TALKS WERE LOW-KEY AND NOT POLEMICAL. THE NEGOTIATIONS WERE CARRIED ON IN THAI AND LAO WITH THE OCCASIONAL FRENCH WORD THROWN IN. WHITEHOUSE

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